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The Impact Of Effective Guided Reading Practices

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THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE GUIDED READING PRACTICES

by
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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in Education

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Chapter One

Introduction

Personal Experience

As an educator, my ultimate goal is to empower students in many ways. Specifically, I want them to become lifelong learners and to fulfill their ultimate educational goals. This will lead to fulfilling their dream of becoming what they want to be. Reading is woven into all fields and facets of life. Reading is fundamental.

Guided reading is a vital part of a child's learning and developing of reading skills. According to the National Reading Panel, "...guided oral reading has been clearly documented by research to be important for developing reading fluency — the ability to read with efficiency and ease" (Langenburg, 2000). If guided reading is successful, a reader also gains success.

I am passionate about guided reading because this is a opportunity when children can gather in a group homogeneously. I am able to provide guidance on the level of book needed for: comprehension, questions to ask themselves as they read, decoding of words and fluency. All of these skills are performed in small group with my guidance. Students need to be taught the skills, to observe the skills modeled effectively, and to practice them before they are put into action independently. Literacy should include authentic literature experiences along with teaching practical reading strategies. This means using a variety of nonfiction and fiction text selections.

For two years of my teaching experience, I had the opportunity to have the English Language cluster for third grade. This is when I found my passion for reading and specifically, guided reading. Learning English as a second language comes with many challenges and can be difficult when teaching whole group for these students. Small, homogeneously grouped students

in reading, allowed me to occasionally to work individually with these students. Though I was not collecting data, I know that my skills were able to transform into understanding for these students.

There are words everywhere, which meant in all subjects my English Language learners were constantly trying to learn new vocabulary. One way that I aided in this quest was to introduce any new vocabulary to them briefly beforehand, even more so, the English Language teachers would confer with me about the vocabulary and they would also prepare these students effectively in small groups.

In addition, I am passionate because reading is something that is important to me in my learning. Words are everywhere, reading is everywhere; reading is crucial to success in life. Reading skills, such as comprehension need to be detailed and practiced.

My area of focus is directly aligned with teaching and learning. Guided reading is a backbone and support to all other subjects and is cross-curricular. I have control over the appropriate level of the book, background knowledge presented, number of students in my group, information presented, quality of my modeling and helpful feedback. “Specifically, guided oral reading helped students across a wide range of grade levels to learn to recognize new words, helped them to read accurately and easily, and helped them to comprehend what they read” (Langenburg, 2000). This is a vital and precious time during the day. I want to improve my intentionality of what I am instructing.

I believe that guided reading can open up new information and skills for students during other reading experiences even when I am not guiding them in conversations. I hold an educational value of empowering students to use and scaffold the reading skills I have taught. I

believe that the depth of reading comprehension and higher-level thinking is critical to a child's overall education. When students are reading independently or even in the real world, there will not always be someone to guide them through decoding a word, they need to use the strategies they have been taught to solve it.

There is quality research about guided reading and it should be utilized. I believe that proper training is imperative for successful reading groups. I also believe that competent, highly educated teachers can make guided reading invaluable. These educators customize the learning for the specific learner (Berne & Degener, 2010). They allow students to make mistakes and help guide them to self-correction, so long as appropriate leveled books are being used (Berne & Degener, 2010).

I wish to improve the quality of my guided reading groups. In second grade, I have grouped my students homogeneously according to my district's reading criteria. The assessment tool that we use is called the Independent Reading Level Assessment, or IRLA. "...IRLA is a unified standards-based framework for student assessment, text leveling, and curriculum and instruction" (ARC, 2015).

Specifically, I would like to be more intentional with what I teach. Generally, I go over the main parts of a book: setting, problem/solution, characters. Also, I would like to increase fluency in my readers; one way to do this is by using reader's theater regularly. This allows students to make sense of the flow of the "play" and the words being used. It also benefits English Language students by increasing their practice in verbal practice of the English language. According to the National Reading Panel, "...guided repeated oral reading procedures that included guidance from teachers, peers, or parents had a significant and positive impact on

word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels. Comprehension of the main idea and the author's purpose is also necessary for my readers to grasp.

Research Question

How can I better improve the quality of homogenous guided reading groups with second graders? What strategies can be implemented on a regular basis to transform in my students' mind and create common language? The variables involved is the difference in prior knowledge with my students, background knowledge of the topics at hand, the temperament of the day with each child, keeping positive and healthy relationships with group members, outside forces that are out of control and other events that may be taking place.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe the effects of quality guided reading on student achievement in reading levels. This will be executed by administering the IRLA testing that is mandatory by my district for assessment and progression in the reading process.

The purpose of my study is to find and use the best practices with my students and see the results based on reading assessments used by my district. I wish to change and catapult all of my students into better comprehension, fluency and word recognition. Guided reading is important to me because I believe it plays a pivotal role in student learning through reading. Learning in small groups can be beneficial for all students, especially struggling students. I know that reading is imperative for students to grow in all areas of learning and I want my short time in guided reading to be instrumental in leading my students to success. The benefit of this research will be to show how effective practices can truly lead my students to become better readers in many aspects.

One variable is my own continuum of learning. While in this process, my pedagogy will be refined. Another variable is the ability level of my students and the parent involvement at home with reading. I have no control over my student's past experiences or ability; I only have control of my content and methodology of teaching during guided reading.

Overview

We, as educators, need to take the complexity of reading seriously. Reading is the gateway to all knowledge that our students will encounter in their lifetime. Word recognition in reading is important and can be taught effectively through guided reading groups. In these groups, students are grouped according to ability level. I, as the teacher, will be using best practices in guided reading for elementary students. I will continue to develop best practices by my research and practice with students.

Reading fluency is something that I have too often seen getting overlooked. It is usually assessed one on one using a given text. It would be difficult for it to be on a standardized test; therefore, to some educators it may not be an imperative piece of their reading instruction. Fluency is defined by the National Reading Panel, "Reading with speed, accuracy, and proper expression without conscious attention; performing multiple reading tasks (e.g., word recognition and comprehension) at the same time." Fluency in practice can be taught as a whole group informally, or one on one with a struggling student.

Reading comprehension and word recognition are also key pieces in the reading process. Students need to be able to accurately process the elements of the story in order to comprehend it. Decoding words is another important factor when considering lessons for guided reading.

Teachers, first need to model, so students can practice with teachers and eventually the students will independently use these skills while reading.

Chapter Two

Overview

Guided reading is an approach for all readers, independent or striving and has three purposes: meet the needs of students to enable them to excel in their reading abilities, to instruct students how to read difficult and varying texts while understanding and being fluent readers, to understand unfamiliar concepts or ideas and to produce meaning of the text by using reading strategies to identify unknown words (Iaquinta, 2006).

Guided reading usually involves one teacher using common text with a particular group. The text level and difficulty is based on the overall level of the reading group at hand. Students are grouped homogeneously based on the school's assessment used to direct students to their accurate reading level. "Ongoing observation of students, combined with systematic assessment, enable teachers to draw together groups of students who fit a particular instructional profile" (Iaquinta, p. 414, 2006). This enables teachers to use their expertise to execute necessary reading skills that striving students are lacking and independent students need their skills to be refined and deepened.

Not only is it important to understand the complexities and strategies of the guided reading time, but also it is also important to know where guided reading came from and how it has evolved over time. When knowledge about a topic is broadened, such as when and where guided reading started; more understanding can be achieved.

Guided reading allows readers to become critical thinkers. Students learn comprehension, decoding and fluency as modeled by their teacher in guided reading. After continuous repetition of a specific skill, students can apply this skill in their own reading. For example, a guided

reading group has been learning about figurative language, specifically, personification in their common text. Personification is when something non-human takes on humanlike characteristics. If an author wrote, “The trees were dancing in the wind,” and a student remembered all the practice they have had with personification, they can apply this new knowledge and identify this statement as an example of personification because humans dance and trees do not.

According to Stephanie DeVos, there is a specific recipe for exceptional and successful guided reading. They include: a variety of instructional texts, homogeneous groups that are flexible with growing minds, assessment practices for comprehension, fluency and strategies, supportive environment, understanding of balanced literacy, organized classroom, running records and record of student progress (DeVos, p. 18, 2010).

The books chosen for guided reading groups should be “just right” for the reader. It should not be too easy, nor too hard, but a level where guidance is still needed from the teacher and eventually turn into independence for the reader (Iaquinta, 2006). Within these groups, there should be flexible grouping based on the reader's individual needs (Iaquinta, 2006). I have personally implemented flexible grouping in my classroom and could see how it allowed the students to fit into a group that was being taught a particular skill that they needed. Students can be strong in fluency, for example, but lack in reading comprehension. With flexible grouping, students can move into groups based on their reading assessment, teacher input and skills needed. Teacher observation is key to dynamic or flexible grouping of students (Iaquinta, 2006). Observation using teacher expertise can become a deeper element of flexible grouping (Iaquinta, 2006).

There are four major components of guided reading. They are: introducing the text, supporting effective reading, teaching processing strategies and discussing and revisiting the text (Denton, Fletcher & et all, p. 274, 2014; as stated by Fountas and Pinnell). In the study conducted by Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, the instructor had students read the book softly and aloud to themselves. This method is contradictory to choral guided reading. Then students can reread the text to themselves to improve fluency. As teachers were listening to the reading aloud, they would assist with difficult words, when necessary. They would do so by scaffolding and common strategies used (Denton, Fletcher & et al., p. 275, 2014).

History of Guided Reading

Originally, teachers in the 1800's in the United States recognized a need for differentiated reading (NRP, 2006). In the 1940's, a prominent reading educator, Emmett Betts proposed the idea of *directed reading activity* (Ford & Opitz, 2011). Betts made guided reading one of the four basic principles of daily reading activities. Betts allowed future reading educators to catapult the idea of "guided reading." They took it a step further and had the entire guided reading time prescribed. These educators are Lillian Grey and Dora Reese in their book called, *Teaching Children to Read*, 2nd Ed. (1957.) They presented three lesson steps to extract the values from the text (Ford & Optiz, 2011).

The first procedure is to ask the guiding question, which will set the stage for the purpose of the lesson. The second step should be prompting questions throughout the book for the students. The questions should be open ended. The purpose of this is to create exploratory thinking in students because they need to rely on themselves for an answer, allows students to

share their thoughts and to satisfy their need to accomplish, helps readers visualize characters and setting, and gives a purpose for the selected section of the reading (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

The third and final lesson step from Grey & Resse is for the students to provide an answer to the initial question and essentially the guiding question of the lesson. By locating the answer to the question, students are able to find closure in the lesson and see the meaning and purpose in the lesson (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Next in guided reading history comes Bond and Wagner in the 1960's. They did provide importance for guided reading, but stated that it should be done silently and that students should prompt the teacher with questions about the text (Ford & Optiz, 2011).

Nearly two decades later, George and Evelyn Spache presented five steps to carry out during a guided reading lesson. The vocabulary should be introduced, silent and oral reading should occur, skill building and additional activities should be taught in all guided reading lessons (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

In the 1990's, Margaret Mooney vocalized her thoughts about how guided reading is a tool used to meet individual needs of students. She argued that independent reading and read aloud time do not cater to students. Following Mooney was Fountas and Pinnell, who have many resources available to teachers on this topic. Fountas and Pinnell narrowed the essentials for guided reading to four: students are groups homogeneously according to reading level and are able to read the about the same level of text, with assessment and observation students are grouped according to their needs and groups are ever changing, students read text and the difficulty progresses over time, finally, the story is introduced by the teacher and students are

guided in a way that teaches necessary strategies of reading with the hope of eventually reading this level independently (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Throughout the decades, groupings of students have mainly stayed the same. The practice of grouping students homogeneously based on their reading level has been unwavering, but the way in which reading is taught has changed over time. One problem that has occurred with guided reading groups is the way in which the material is being taught and how it is being taught.

In the past, teachers were using basal materials that were teacher directed and the questioning was literal level (Ford & Opitz, 2011). This was not the optimal instruction and teachers went to whole group instruction thinking that would be more beneficial for students. Fast forward to the 1990's, when reading shifted once again toward small group instruction, but using different materials and teaching methods. Fountas and Pinnell suggested that implementing small group reading instruction in the classroom would aid in less students leaving the room for intervention.

Key changes from the past are continual assessments on students and dynamic grouping, teaching the learner, gradual release of the reading responsibility to students and the teacher coaching the students when needed (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Scaffolding also plays a role in the guided reading process. In 1998, Boyle and Peregoy developed the five stages of scaffolding during the guided reading time and beyond. They are applied reading and writing activities that correlate with texts, teachers need to make their language patterns predictable, model skill and language patterns, support students in comprehension and writing above their independent reading level and once these skills are mastered, teachers can discontinue the use of these skills (Ford & Opitz, 2011).

Fountas and Pinnell are the forerunners to the literacy initiative taking place in many of our schools. They have established many articles and research throughout the past couple of decades. “Regardless of decade or author, all agree that guided reading is planned, intentional, focused instruction where the teacher helps students, usually in small group settings, learn more about the reading process” (Ford & Optiz, p. 229, 2011). Though the experts in the field of reading may have different ways of getting there, they all have the same end goal: students reading at their highest potential.

Teacher Practices

Responsive guided reading is an imperative piece of effective practices for educators. This approach ensures students’ the liberty of having individualized reading instruction from a professional (Berne & Degener, 2010). My district and many have moved to a literacy block during the day. It is composed of independent and guided reading, writing and word study. Differentiation is needed from the teacher in all of these sections, but this can prove difficulty because of class size and the differentiation gap between students (Berne & Degener, 2010).

Effective methods of teaching are to model, assist together and eventually have the student perform the task individually (Berne & Degener, 2010). The teacher modeling for various skills, not only occurs during the given guided reading time block, but also throughout the day. Shared reading is a perfect example of this. When shared reading is incorporated in a daily routine, students hear the teacher’s intonation, fluency, pausing, flow and can ultimately listen to their “thoughts.” This is a time where teachers can use what they have been teaching in guided reading and apply it outwardly to the class (Berne & Degener, 2010). For example, students are learning about the story elements: problem and solution. Currently, a character in the

class shared reading is experiencing difficulty with respecting their friend. The teacher can stop and let the students identify the problem they are seeing and give suggestions as to how to solve the problem. Eventually, the students can identify the solution when it appears.

Quality teacher language is essential for student learning. There is an allotted amount of time that teachers have to instruct in their small group. This time needs to be used wisely and efficiently. During the reading time, teachers can use language to guide the readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). This enables the teacher to: “demonstrate, prompt, and support the reader in efficient processing” (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 279, 2013).

Though this capstone is about guided reading, which is led by the teacher, there is another important element to keep in mind. Many times, struggling reading may not be receiving the most quality instruction that they so desperately need. “Too often, struggling readers work with paraprofessionals in their reading intervention services” (Arlington, p. 523, 2013). Quality teachers are imperative in struggling readers’ improvement.

Teach, prompt and reinforce are three ways of teaching students processing skills overtime. One common phrase that can be tailored for the specific situation while reading is, “try again, let me show you, does that make sense?” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). These phrases can be used to teach, prompt and reinforce a skill. For example, a student is reading the chosen text and they encounter a difficult word and choose to guess at the word instead of using strategies, such as chunking. The teacher can facilitate a short conversation once the student has completed the reading portion; the teacher can prompt a question such as, “Does the word you said make sense?” Then prompt a bit more if needed. This allows for some professional guidance, but also allows the student to critique and edit his or her learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013).

“The goal of guided reading is to help student build their reading power—to build a network of strategic actions for processing texts” (Fountas & Pinnell, p. 272, 2013). The goal of guided reading is not to accomplish another task for teachers, nor is it to just read a book, but rather it is to be engaging and build reading power in students. It is meant to equip students with strategies such as, decoding words, questioning, author’s purpose and comprehension.

To be highly effective in teaching, teachers must reflect on their practices thoroughly. To have high quality of reflection, according to Fountas and Pinnell, you must “pause and ponder” (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). The goal of guided reading time is to teach the reader using the text. Teachers should be asking themselves how the reader reacts when they make a mistake or encounter a difficult part of the text? As well as, how does a teacher turn over control to the reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013)? Something else to ponder is the purpose of the lesson. Has the teacher met their goal with the lesson using high quality language? Bringing self-awareness to a teacher’s practice aids in the teacher refining their practice. They use forward thinking about how they will build off of this lesson tomorrow.

Reading Comprehension

Guided reading offers a unique experience for readers. It allows our readers to be with similar ability students; it can make them feel more comfortable with their abilities if they are striving. If they are exceeding reading expectations, guided reading is a place where they can continue to scaffold their knowledge. Student dialogue regarding the common text in their group will further develop their understanding because they can learn from each other (DeVos, 2010). This allows them to further scaffold their understanding.

Michael P. Ford & Michael F. Opitz collected 1,500 surveys from around the country from K-2 teachers to better understand guided reading practices (Ford & Opitz, 2008). Research shows that when children are aware of their reading behaviors, they make good progress” Metacognition is knowing what you know and students can gain this highly beneficial skill during guided reading (Ford & Opitz, 2008 as stated by: Brown & Palinscar, 1982; Raphael, 1982). Research shows that progress can be made when students are conscious of their reading proficiency (Ford & Opitz, 2008 as stated by: Brown & Palinscar, 1982; Raphael, 1982). As educators, we need to remember that we are not only teaching our students information, but we are teaching them how to think. We are also teaching them to think about the way they think.

According to Iaquina (2006), students will self-check while reading, along with recognizing new things in the text (DeVos, 2010 as stated on p. 414 by Iaquina 2006). Students will also search for cues, confirm their reading and self correct (DeVos, 2010 as stated on p. 414 by Iaquina 2006). DeVos spoke about the complexity of the reading process and mentioned that the intentionality is where the reader will improve. As students are reading, they should go through a process that includes these strategies. According to Anderson (2016,) who had a control group and experimental group of guided reading, there was a significant improvement in their reading comprehension. The experimental group had the most improvement in the second half of the school year (Anderson, 2016).

When educators are explicit and efficient with their guided reading instruction, students can gain momentum in their reading achievement. Word recognition can improve along with comprehension. Comprehension is a key component to the reading process. According the NRP,

the positive outcomes for students apply to all students; good reading and striving readers (NRP, 2006).

With the increasing speed that students are reading, they are missing key components of the comprehension. Instead of decoding words using strategies, students tend to skip the word and alter the meaning of the text (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013).

Student Grouping

In 2000, the National Reading Panel had findings from their research; it was comprised of several organizations to come to its findings. The organizations included: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Secretary of Education among many other experts in the field of children's health and education. "...the Panel concluded that guided repeated oral reading procedures that included guidance from teachers, peers, or parents had a significant and positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels" (NRP 2006). Students are grouped according to ability level; they have similar strategies while reading. Guided reading is one part of the reading instruction (Denton, Fletcher & et al, p. 270, 2014).

As of now, the records that are kept for students are saved online and track students starting in kindergarten. Teachers are able to look at past reading assessments for their students to gain a well-rounded view of their reading past. One other thing to keep in mind besides the quality of the content is the frequency of guided reading. In the primary grades, students should see their teacher daily for guided reading (DeVos, p. 19, 2010).

"Groups are composed of students who are able to read text on about the same level and use similar text-processing strategies, based on ongoing observations and assessments" Student grouping should be based on students' similar abilities to process text according to assessments

and teacher monitoring (Denton, Fletcher & et all, 2014). Groups should also be dynamic or flexible. This allows for students to become part of the reading community because they can collaborate their thoughts to that of other group members (Iaquinta, 2006). It also allows them to be “flexible” in their thinking because they know that groups are temporary and not permanent.

Fluency

The way that researchers have been thinking about fluency in the 20th century has been all-wrong. The assumption was that with proficient word recognition, fluency would be a positive product that would come naturally to the reader. Therefore, teachers’ energy was focused toward word recognition and fluency was ignored (NRP, 2000).

Oral language is an essential element to understating the purpose of guided reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). It helps students process the text they are reading; it allows the language to be controlled (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). Vocabulary is a key piece in fluency because language is something that students are familiar with, now they are applying those language skills to the text. The first step in guided reading and to aid in fluency is to introduce the book that also can help with comprehension. When a teacher specifically demonstrates parts of fluency to students, they can then repeat the skills and further their goal to becoming a more fluent reader (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013).

Reading specialists typically begin their lessons with a book that is familiar to their students. The students have read and mastered this particular text. Primary classrooms should allow for this reading “warm-up.” It is imperative that the books be at the student's independent or instructional reading level (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016).

Guided reading methods play a large role in the comprehension of the text. Some possible procedures are repeated reading, paired reading, radio reading and other ways to promote fluent reading (NRP, 2000). “If phonics instruction improves word recognition, and if word recognition influences growth in reading fluency, then we can assume that reading fluency is influenced by phonics” (Eldredge, p. 163, 2016). Word recognition and fluency are directly related when it comes to improving fluency (Eldredge, 2016).

As students are reading to themselves aloud, the educator needs to provide fluency feedback and intervene with additional modeling when necessary. One strategy of ensuring quality fluency practice, educators can reread text to sound like someone is talking. If it still proves difficult, the educator can do additional modeling of fluent reading (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016).

Fluency, according to Fountas and Pinnell is not about the rate of the reader, but instead, word stress, intonation, pausing and phrasing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). Students are increasingly becoming faster readers, but that does not mean there is an improvement in all areas and it does not mean they are necessarily a fluent reader. When readers rush through a given text, they may be omitting key words in a story. This affects their fluency and ultimately their understanding of the text in general (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013).

An important consideration to remember is about the English Language Learners. Frequent repetition of idioms and syntactic patterns will help these students gain fluency (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013).

Summary

In conclusion, the experts seem to be expressing similar thoughts on the topic of guided reading. Guided reading should be intentional, groupings of students should be fluid according to new data found on students and there are many components to the reading process. Guided reading materials need to be at the students' levels and to increase in difficulty as needed with students. This will all aid in the comprehension in the reading process. Fluency is another key piece in guided reading. Fluency is often overlooked, but it is necessary to become a strong, knowledgeable reader.

It is imperative to know the past of guided reading to see the whole development and continuum of the process. This helps educators understand the reasoning and methods behind their reading practices.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this section in my capstone is to provide the rationale and methods used to collect the necessary data. I used effective methods to further my guided reading groups in fluency, comprehension, teacher practices and student grouping. This was a quantitative methods study because of the experimental design that I used to measure the student's' progress using various assessments throughout. The assessments included district reading assessments and teacher observations. My research question that will be guiding this methodology is: *How can I better improve the quality of homogenous-guided reading groups with second graders? What strategies can be implemented on a regular basis to transform in my students' mind and create common language?*

Research Design and Methods

I chose the quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014) because it will fulfill the data needed to conduct and analyze my research. In this design, one group will receive one method of teacher practices during guided reading, while another group of students will not (Creswell, 2014). Then I used this data to determine what influence teacher practices had on student performance according to district assessments and observations. This was an experimental design, where the basic intent is to "...test the impact of a treatment (or an intervention) on an outcome, controlling for all other factors that might influence that outcome" (Creswell, p. 156, 2014). After further thought about this research, I decided to give all of my students the same methods. I found it beneficial to all students to offer the same knowledge.

The design is between the postpositivist and constructivist worldview. There was a collection of data based on reading assessments of students, which would be postpositivist. As well as, constructivist worldview because students in my reading groups will be basing their understanding of their experiences.

For the form of control, I used effective teacher practices on the chosen population of students. One example of the methods I used is repeated reading after mastery of the text. Data will be longitudinal which is collected over time (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data was used alongside grade reading levels set by the district for all students to meet in their grade. The assessment tests comprehension and fluency, which are two components of my research.

Assessment/ Instruments

The assessment being used is IRLA (Independent Reading Level Assessment) created by the American Reading Company. This is a standards-based assessment that uses multiple areas of reading to guide the educator to the students' independent reading level (IRLA, 2015). Fluency and comprehension are two goals for second graders in this system. This data is collected for every student beginning when they start school in our district. This gives me as the researcher more information about my readers longitudinally in addition to the data I will be collecting this school year. Reliability also needs to be considered in this assessment. When the test is administered a second time, the results need to be the same (Creswell, 2014). Another teacher who is also trained in administering this particular assessment can do this.

To be a true researcher, there must not be one single source of information (Mills, 2013). Therefore, not only will observations and assessments take place, as will student exit cards. This

triangulation will help keep a balance of my sources and not favor one over another (Mills, 2013).

Observations

The observations took place within the guided reading groups being researched. They will be self-anecdotal notes about individual students' errors while reading and self-correction. As well as, their comprehension while discussing in guided reading. Observations were informal and based on my knowledge in guided reading with fluency and comprehension.

Data Collection

Participants/Setting

For my participants, I would like use my highest achieving reading group as my control group. I will use the same methods on all groups. I plan to have five reading groups. The participants are seven and eight year olds in a mainstream classroom. There are eleven boys and ten girls that participated in the study. There are eight students that are not of caucasian descent. There are three students in my class that have an IEP. Five of my students qualified for English Language services in pull out groups. The English Language teacher also co teaches writing with me every four out of six days. After further thought about my research, I decided to use my entire class in my data. I tracked all students.

This study took place in an elementary school that is K-5 in the upper Midwest. The district is composed of seventeen elementary schools, four middle schools and three high schools. There are roughly 17,000 students enrolled with about 15% of them being special education students. The school that this research was conducted in has around 700 students enrolled.

The setting was in my second grade classroom. There is a designated guided reading table and area in my room. The homogeneous reading groups came to my table daily to meet with me for about 10-15 minutes. The time of day was almost always late morning during centers time. While I conducted my guided reading groups, the rest of the class will be working independently either at their desks or quietly in small groups on some sort of activity. I did incorporate centers into this time, with guided reading with me being one of the centers. The classroom procedure during this time will be predictable for multiple reasons.

Procedure

The methods in guided reading need to be precise and consistent with the group that is being studied. Three things that I did during instruction; is model, assist together and eventually have the student perform the tasks individually (Berne & Degener, 2010). The teacher should be responsive to the individual needs of the student. Teacher modeling occurs throughout the entire day, but is especially important during guided reading because the educator has the opportunity to assist students individually. The goal of guided reading is to empower students with reading skills that can carry over into their independent reading times.

Teachers should use language to guide the readers (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). By doing so, the teacher can demonstrate, prompt and support the reader using effective processing (Fountas & Pinnell, 2013). When shared reading is incorporated in a daily routine, students hear the teacher's intonation, fluency, pausing, flow and can ultimately listen to their own thoughts. This can reinforce the skills trying to be conveyed to the learners.

By adding word recognition into the guided reading procedure with the experimental group, I predict that fluency should increase. Fluency is directly influenced by word recognition

and when a student has a strong grasp on the word recognition, comprehension can be improved as well.

With all of these skills and practices in mind there is an effective procedure to this guided reading process. I will present the book and quickly review the parts of the book (front and back cover, chapters, title page, etc.). Next, we read the book together, while I listen to the positive and errors of the readers. Once this is complete, I had the students lead the discussion on the elements of the book (setting, characters, problem/solution, plot/lesson of the story,) if all are applicable. If it was non-fiction, we discussed the format, table of contents and new vocabulary. Students then read the story independently aloud, while I monitored for comprehension, fluency and decoding of words. I assisted when needed and further their thinking about the story. Last, students completed the shared reading with another group member to further their accuracy with the text, which aids in improving fluency.

Ethics/Equity

As a researcher, teacher and human, it is my job and duty to be equitable in my research and practice that I am using with my students. I am giving my time and resources equally amongst my students and always have. I will be fair to all families and honor their consent to use their child's progress in my research. The Human Subjects Committee Procedures Handbook will be referenced throughout the research process to ensure anonymity and uphold quality in my ethics. "In research, the ends do not justify the means, and researchers must not put their need to carry out their study above their responsibility to maintain the well-being of the study participants" (Mills, p. 37, 2014). Both the Mills and Creswell texts will be referenced often throughout my research.

Data Analysis

IRLA will be my main source of data throughout this collection of data of my second graders. According to IRLA, students should be reading at 1R (or higher) in the beginning of the school year and a 2R moving into a White level reader (or higher) at the end of second grade. These levels encompass skills such as, vowel teams, suffixes, three letter consonant blends, two and three syllable words with vowel digraphs, develop reading stamina, fluency, chapter books and multisyllabic words with irregular vowel patterns (IRLA, 2015). I will use the scores from this assessment as well as my observations consistently during the school year. I hope to see the progression of the reading scores after I implement the guided reading strategies.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to find and use the best practices with my students and see the results based on reading assessments used by my district. I wish to change and catapult all of my students into better comprehension, fluency and teacher practices. Guided reading is important to me because I believe it plays a pivotal role in student learning through reading. Learning in small groups can be beneficial for all students, especially striving students. I know that reading is imperative for students to grow in all areas of learning and I want my short time in guided reading to be instrumental in leading my students to success. The benefit of this research will be to show how effective practices can truly lead my students to become better readers in many aspects. The next chapter will display the results of my study.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

How can I better improve the quality of homogenous-guided reading groups with second graders? What strategies can be implemented on a regular basis to transform in my students' mind and create common language? The goal of this capstone was to answer this action research question. Quantitative data was collected throughout this process, as stated in chapter three. Data was collected for six school weeks, but not all were full weeks of school. Student reading levels were collected over this period of time while using best practices during guided reading. November 21, 2016- January 6, 2017 are the exact dates of which data was collected and analyzed. There were twenty one students who took part in this study and all of which are either seven or eight year olds. Eleven of which were male and ten were female. Students were assessed on their reading levels at least once every two weeks with me one on one. All students met with me for guided reading instruction two to three times a week in their homogenous reading group. Previous to the study conducted, parents or guardians returned permission slips describing the study. All students returned the permission slips prior to beginning data collection and research.

Assessments

I used my district reading assessment that was created and developed by the American Reading Company. Students should be reading at level 2R by this time in the school year. All assessments were administered uniformly and tracked using a data collection website in my district. The color and grade level visual is in appendix H for IRLA.

Week 1 November 21-22 Results

See Appendix A

Seventeen students were reading at or above grade level during week one. Out of the seventeen readers: seven are reading 2R (end of 2nd grade) and five are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level.) While four students were below grade level. All four students were receiving additional support out of the classroom.

Week 2 November 28-December 2 Results

See Appendix B

Fifteen students were reading at or above grade level and making sufficient growth in their reading level. Out of the fifteen readers: seven are reading 2R (end of 2nd grade) and five are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level.) Two students were reading at 1R (on grade level,) but were not making sufficient growth in this level. The same four students were below grade level and continuing their support outside the classroom.

Week 3 December 5-9 Results

See Appendix C

There are seven students not making sufficient growth in their levels, four of which are not reading on grade level. This week, there was a 1B reader who moved up a level to 2B. As well as, a 2G reader who moved up to a 1B reading level. There are fourteen readers who are reading at or above grade level and are making sufficient growth. Out of the fourteen readers: seven are reading 2R (end of 2nd grade) and five are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level.)

Week 4 December 12-16 Results

See Appendix D

There are fifteen students reading at or above grade level and making sufficient growth. Out of the fifteen students: seven are reading at 2R (end of 2nd grade,) four are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level) and one has moved to reading at 4th grade level (black color level.)

There are seven students who are not making sufficient reading growth, four of which are reading at 1R (still on grade level.) There was a 2B reader that in now one of the four 1R readers this week.

Week 5 December 19-22 Results

See Appendix E

There are fifteen students reading at or above grade level and making sufficient growth. Out of the fifteen students: eight are reading at 2R (end of 2nd grade,) three are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level) and two are reading at 4th grade level (black color level.) There are six students that are not making sufficient reading growth, three of which are reading at 1R (still grade level.) There was a 1R reading that moved to 2R this week.

Week 6 January 3-6 Results

See Appendix F

There are fifteen students reading at or above grade level and making sufficient growth. Out of the fifteen students: eight are reading at 2R (end of 2nd grade,) three are reading at 3rd grade level (white color level) and two are reading at 4th grade level (black color level.) There are six

students that are not making sufficient reading growth, three of which are reading at 1R (still grade level.) There was a 1B reader that moved to 2B this week.

Data Analysis

Students should be reading at 1R (or higher) in the beginning of the school year and a 2R moving into a White level reader (or higher) at the end of second grade. These levels encompass skills such as, vowel teams, suffixes, three letter consonant blends, two and three syllable words with vowel digraphs, develop reading stamina, fluency, chapter books and multisyllabic words with irregular vowel patterns (IRLA, 2015). As well as deepen their understanding and appreciation of the books they are reading.

Teacher Practices

During the six weeks of this study, I used best practices for guided reading as stated earlier in this capstone. Each of the five reading in my groups were based on reading levels and grouped homogeneously. My highest three groups had a maximum of five students per group, but due to research I have read, my lower achieving readers were placed in smaller groups. This was an advantage to the lower achieving groups because it improved the teacher to student ratio.

Grouping: The fluidity of groups changed based on the reading assessments conducted at least every two weeks with the students. My lowest and highest reading groups did not change the members throughout this six week data collection. For example, in week 3 two students swapped places between the middle achieving and second highest group. Both students were reading at a 2R level, but one had more growth in the level than the other. In week 4 and 5, there were two students who moved up from a white reading level to black. However, they did not move in their reading groups because they were already in the highest reading group. In week

four, one student moved from 1R to 2R reading level. Therefore, I moved this student from the second lowest reading group to the middle reading group.

Procedure: Every group had a book that was at their instructional level. This is the level one above their independent reading level. This way students are exposed to more challenging text, but not so challenging that students will want to abandon the book. The books were both instructional and fictional text throughout the six weeks of data.

Step One: Students would take their seat at a kidney bean shaped table with me in the middle. They would preview their new reading book for the week. They looked at pictures and figured out if it was informational text or fictional text. If informational, they would locate text features, such as text boxes, glossary, index, key words, photographs, illustrations, etc. I would ask prediction questions and if they have any information about the topic.

Step Two: Students and I would read aloud using various techniques, such as choral reading, round robin reading, whisper reading in the beginning of the story. I would have student led discussion on the story.

Step Three: Students would continue reading the middle section of the book independently using a whisper voice, so I could hear their fluency and accuracy.

Step Four: We would come back together and depending on the reading level I was working with, we would deepen our thoughts on the book with student led discussion.

Step Five: Students would independently finish reading the story. We would come back together when all students were done and see if our predictions were accurate, think

beyond the story and have some “craft” discussion about how the author chose to write the story and end the story there.

Next time I met with students, we would review the story and refresh our brains on the beginning, middle and end of story components and/or text features. Students would then whisper read the entire story independently, while I listen for accuracy and aid in fluency techniques. Lastly, students would read to a partner in the group and the partner would then read the entire book back to them. This repetition of the story aids in accuracy and fluency with a text because of the repeated exposure and mastery of the text.

Comprehension and Fluency

The district assessment was administered on a regular basis, as previously stated at least once every two weeks. It tested all students either at or above their reading level on comprehension and fluency. To be on reading level for the second half of the year, students must be reading at level 2R (see appendix I). At the conclusion of the research, there are eight students that are below grade level in comprehension and fluency. Six of those students are reading beginning of second grade reading level, but two of these students are still on target at this point in the school year. Two of the eight are comprehending and their fluency is at first grade reading level; one at the middle of first grade and one at the end. 71.4% of my class are on target for their reading progress for the year thus far. Six students in my class are comprehending and their fluency is on grade level for this time of year. Five students in my class are comprehending and their fluency is at third grade level. Two of my students are comprehending and their fluency is at fourth grade level. For anecdotal notes that were taken throughout data collection (see appendix J).

Findings

November 21, the first week of data collection and research, 81.5% of my class, 17 out of 21 students were reading at 1R reading level or above with the appropriate amount of growth. 2R then became the target reading level near the end of my data collection because the year was halfway over at this point. By the last day of data collection, January 6, there were 15 out of 21 students on target for their reading level. That equates to 71.4% of my class on target. Though all of my students are making progress through this process of guided reading and I am proud that they are moving up in their comprehension and fluency, I am disappointed that more of them are not on target. Comprehension, fluency and word recognition all improved for students, but not all are on grade level. See appendix A for the exact growth since the beginning of the year.

Holistic Scope of Data

Though I believe that guided reading made a strong impact on reading scores in all areas of reading for my students, there is more to consider when looking at student data. The two students that are reading middle and end of first grade reading level receive additional reading and phonics services. They both receive EL services where they learn phonics and grammar. They also receive daily one on one support from the reading specialist. These support services should be considered when looking at growth in their reading because teachers work as a team for progress for remedial instruction. Also, two other students were intermittently receiving reading specialist services throughout the six weeks of data collection. Five students, including the four already mentioned in this section, receive EL services. Recently, I was informed by a student's parent that they are experiencing an eye problem. The student is receiving eye therapy in hopes of re-training the eyes to follow accurately.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Introduction

In this study, my goal was to answer the question: *How can I better improve the quality of homogenous-guided reading groups with second graders? What strategies can be implemented on a regular basis to transform in my students' mind and create common language?* In this chapter, I will give a summary of the methods I used to improve the quality of guided reading with my second graders. I will also state and summarize the strategies used to create common language during guided reading and interpret the research results from chapter four.

Overview

My research was conducted in my 2nd grade classroom with eleven boys and ten girls in Rochester. I sought to see improvement in their reading levels throughout the six weeks of the study. I used the quantitative methods design because of the fluency, comprehension and reading level that I would be tracking. Initially, I was also going to administer exit cards for my groups, but during the process, opted out of using these because I was not able to allot time for this. By the time I was able to go through the guided reading process using best practices, it was time to move on to something else in the day. In the beginning of the research, I was going to have a control group of students where I was not using best practices, but my conscience and ethics came into play because I did not feel as though this was fair. I was hired to teach all students and bestow my knowledge onto them, this step would not have been ensuring that to all students. Over six weeks time, guided reading groups were fluid and changed when students' reading level

changed. I monitored the participants' word recognition, fluency and reading comprehension. Best practices, according to my literary review were used. All data was tracked in a district assessment tool that was created by The American Reading Company.

Comprehension

Throughout the six weeks of data collection, I was intentional with the comprehension skills needed for specific reading levels. With all students I did my best to be the most efficient I could with the time allotted for guided reading. My below grade level reading groups I focused on setting, characters, problem/solution and beginning, middle, end of the story. These students were/are missing the foundational skills of retell and comprehension. Though they did not reach grade level in comprehension or are reading at grade level, they still progressed in these areas, which is what we as teachers hope for our students.

For students reading at grade level, we established the setting, characters, problem/solution quickly, but would soon move on to connections that we can make between ourselves and the book. As well as, begin talking about the author's purpose for this book. What is it suppose to teach us? For student reading above grade level, we reviewed the basics to a fiction book like the other groups and would scaffold on this knowledge. With this group, students would move on to character traits, morals of the story and text to text connections.

For nonfiction text, all students were instructed on the various text features. The students reading below grade level may not have had access in their books to many text features, but could recognize the ones that were present. For at and above grade level readers, they exposed in their books to many text features, such as: labels, photographs/illustrations, table of contents, index, graphs, glossary, etc.

Fluency

For all reading groups, the students were required to read aloud in various ways. As a group, we read together the first time, then students read to themselves and finally students read with a partner. Reading aloud and hearing others read aloud can improve fluency, as well as the repetition and mastery of the book they have read multiple times. Fluency improved in all but one student, while eight students were still below grade level in fluency. Though everyone grew, they are not all on grade level. Though the research has concluded, I believe that I will continue to see improvement in this area because of my continued effort and efficiency during guided reading time.

Word Recognition

For each reading level, there are required words that are appropriate for that level. As students read our guided reading books aloud in the group, they can and sometimes would pause after reading a word that did not make sense. They use decoding strategies that they know to decode the unknown word, as well as comprehension questions, such as, does that make sense? If they still could not come up with the correct word, I would intervene with reminding them of word chunks. They then should be able to decode the unknown word and reread the section to further the student's comprehension.

Homogenous Skilled Grouping

As stated previously in this capstone, guided reading grouping is important. Best practices include: homogeneously ability grouped and fluidity in grouping. Throughout my research, groups were changed according to the student's reading level, with the lower achieving

readers in smaller groups. All students were grouped according to their reading level according to IRLA. The most fluid groups were the middle three groups. My highest and lowest groups stayed mostly the same, while the three middle reading groups changed more frequently throughout the research.

Classroom Conclusions

Overall, I am satisfied with my results. I am proud of my students and the hard work that they put in daily. My students have motivation and drive to achieve their goals, though they are not all on grade level, they are all working hard to achieve their full potential. Due to this research, I have gained a greater knowledge and understanding of the importance of guided reading. Guided reading is just one part of a student's reading journey, but it can unlock many beneficial reading strategies. I plan on keeping the same routine with my guided reading groups and hope to see continued progress in comprehension, fluency and word recognition. As far as the students receiving intervention, there is criteria that I have no control over. I still have one student who sees the reading specialist daily, while one sees the specialist regularly, but not daily.

Final Conclusions

Initially, I did not intend to find data a vital part of my job. Though I do see the need and benefits of data driven instruction, it has never been as personal as it is now. Data drives many areas in education, but I have never been the instigator of data and dug into as I did in this research. Before this research, I used only the reading level to drive my instruction, now I also look at the specific growth of the reader, length of time and what exactly is holding them back

from moving to the next level. I have an appreciation of data and of the ways that I can use it to further drive my instruction.

Efficiency and best practices further student progress, there is no quick and easy way to achieve this. Practice, perseverance and intervention are vital elements in the reading process. I have a new outlook on the reading process and have great respect for all who are involved in a child's reading journey.

Appendix
Appendix A

Week 1 November 21-22 Results

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
1B	1.35	2.2	0.85	-0.04
1R	2.23	2.2		0.83
2B	1.6	2.2	0.6	0.3
2R	2.9	2.2		0.4
2R	2.82	2.2		0.82
Wt	3.39	2.2		0.27
1R	2.28	2.2		0.56
2R	2.87	2.2		0.37
1R	2.34	2.2		0.34
2G	1.22	2.2	0.98	0
2R	2.65	2.2		0.65
1R	2.38	2.2		0.78
1B	1.3	2.2	0.9	0.13
Wt	3.43	2.2		1.17
2R	2.81	2.2		0.59
Wt	3.38	2.2		0.38
2R	2.72	2.2		0.22
Wt	3.35	2.2		-0.65
1R	2.13	2.2	0.07	0.49

2R	2.79	2.2	0.61
Wt	3.22	2.2	0.22

Appendix B

Week 2 November- December 2 Results

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
1B	1.35	2.3	0.95	-0.04
1R	2.23	2.3	0.07	0.83
2B	1.6	2.3	0.7	0.3
2R	2.9	2.3		0.4
2R	2.82	2.3		0.82
Wt	3.39	2.3		0.27
1R	2.28	2.3	0.02	0.56
2R	2.87	2.3		0.37
1R	2.34	2.3		0.34
2G	1.22	2.3	1.08	0
2R	2.65	2.3		0.65
1R	2.4	2.3		0.8
1B	1.3	2.3	1	0.13
Wt	3.43	2.3		1.17
2R	2.81	2.3		0.59
Wt	3.38	2.3		0.38
2R	2.72	2.3		0.22
Wt	3.86	2.3		-0.14
1R	2.29	2.3	0.01	0.65

2R	2.81	2.3	0.63
Wt	3.22	2.3	0.22

Appendix C
Week 3 December 5-9 Results

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
2B	1.6	2.3	0.7	0.21
1R	2.27	2.3	0.03	0.87
2B	1.6	2.3	0.7	0.3
2R	2.9	2.3		0.4
2R	2.82	2.3		0.82
Wt	3.39	2.3		0.27
1R	2.28	2.3	0.02	0.56
2R	2.87	2.3		0.37
1R	2.34	2.3		0.34
1B	1.37	2.3	0.93	0.15
2R	2.65	2.3		0.65
1R	2.4	2.3		0.8
1B	1.5	2.3	0.8	0.33
Wt	3.78	2.3		1.52
2R	2.81	2.3		0.59
Wt	3.38	2.3		0.38
2R	2.75	2.3		0.25
Wt	3.86	2.3		-0.14
1R	2.29	2.3	0.01	0.65

2R	2.81	2.3	0.63
Wt	3.39	2.3	0.39

Appendix D
Week 4 December 12-16 Results

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
1R	2	2.3	0.3	0.61
1R	2.27	2.3	0.03	0.87
2B	1.6	2.3	0.7	0.3
2R	2.91	2.3		0.41
2R	2.82	2.3		0.82
Wt	3.39	2.3		0.27
1R	2.28	2.3	0.02	0.56
2R	2.93	2.3		0.43
2R	2.5	2.3		0.5
1B	1.37	2.3	0.93	0.15
2R	2.75	2.3		0.75
1R	2.4	2.3		0.8
1B	1.5	2.3	0.8	0.33
Wt	3.78	2.3		1.52
2R	2.9	2.3		0.68
Wt	3.38	2.3		0.38
2R	2.75	2.3		0.25
Bk	4	2.3		0
1R	2.4	2.3		0.76

2R	2.86	2.3		0.68
Wt	3.39	2.3		0.39

Appendix E
Week 5 Results December 19-22

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
1R	2	2.3	0.3	0.61
1R	2.27	2.3	0.03	0.87
2B	1.6	2.3	0.7	0.3
2R	2.91	2.3		0.41
2R	2.82	2.3		0.82
Bk	4	2.3		0.88
1R	2.28	2.3	0.02	0.56
2R	2.93	2.3		0.43
2R	2.5	2.3		0.5
1B	1.37	2.3	0.93	0.15
2R	2.75	2.3		0.75
1R	2.4	2.3		0.8
1B	1.5	2.3	0.8	0.33
Wt	3.78	2.3		1.52
2R	2.9	2.3		0.68
Wt	3.38	2.3		0.38
2R	2.75	2.3		0.25
Bk	4	2.3		0
1R	2.4	2.3		0.76

2R	2.86	2.3		0.68
Wt	3.39	2.3		0.39

Appendix F
Week 6 January 3-6 Results

IRLA Reading Level	IRLA Score	IRLA Target	IRLA Gap	IRLA Growth
1R	2	2.4	0.4	0.61
1R	2.27	2.4	0.13	0.87
2B	1.6	2.4	0.8	0.3
2R	2.91	2.4		0.41
2R	2.82	2.4		0.82
Bk	4	2.4		0.88
1R	2.28	2.4	0.12	0.56
2R	2.93	2.4		0.43
2R	2.5	2.4		0.5
1B	1.37	2.4	1.03	0.15
2R	2.75	2.4		0.75
1R	2.4	2.4		0.8
2B	1.6	2.4	0.8	0.43
Wt	3.93	2.4		1.67
2R	2.9	2.4		0.68
Wt	3.38	2.4		0.38
2R	2.76	2.4		0.26
Bk	4	2.4		0
1R	2.4	2.4		0.76

2R	2.86	2.4	0.68
Wt	3.39	2.4	0.39

Appendix G

As of January 10, 2017

Schoolpace.com, American Reading Company. Date accessed: January 6, 2017.

1B	2B	1R	2R	Wt	Bk
1.37	1.60	2.00	2.69	3.00	4.08
1B	2B	1R	2R	Wt	Bk
Growth: 0.37 Years	Growth: 0.60 Years	Growth: 0.70 Years	Growth: 0.69 Years	Growth: 0.50 Years	Growth: 1.08 Years
		2.00	2.75	3.00	4.12
		1R	2R	Wt	Bk
		Growth: 0.70 Years	Growth: 0.75 Years	Growth: 0.50 Years	Growth: 1.62 Years
		2.27	2.76	3.38	
		1R	2R	Wt	
		Growth: 0.27 Years	Growth: 0.26 Years	Growth: 0.38 Years	
		2.28	2.82	3.39	
		1R	2R	Wt	
		Growth: 0.68 Years	Growth: 0.82 Years	Growth: 0.39 Years	
		2.40	2.86	3.93	
		1R	2R	Wt	
		Growth: 0.80 Years	Growth: 0.36 Years	Growth: 1.43 Years	
		2.40	2.94		
		1R	2R		
		Growth: 0.40 Years	Growth: 0.44 Years		

Appendix H

IRLA Leveling Chart

Hileman, J., & Cline, G. Z. (2015). *IRLA: Independent Reading Level Assessment Framework*.

United States: American Reading Company.

IRLA Level	Standards-Based Grade Level Expectation
Read to Me	PreK
2-Yellow	Kindergarten, First Half
1-Green	Kindergarten, Second Half
2-Green	1st Grade, First Third
1-Blue	1st Grade, Middle Third
2-Blue	1st Grade, Final Third
1-Red	2nd Grade, First Half
2-Red	2nd Grade, Second Half
White	3rd Grade
Black	4th Grade
Orange	5th Grade
Purple	6th Grade
1-Bronze	7th Grade
2-Bronze	8th Grade
Silver	9th & 10th Grade
Gold	11th & 12th Grade

Appendix I

To Parents/Guardians Requesting Permission for Minors to Take Part in Research
 November 2016
 Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am your child's 2nd grade teacher and a graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research in my classroom from November 21-January 6, 2017. The purpose of this letter is to ask your permission for

your child to take part in my research. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

I want to study how using best practices in guided reading. I have used these best practices for the past year and want to collect information about them for my study. All students will be grouped for guided reading based on similar reading levels. I will be using best practices with all groups.

There is little to no risk for your child to participate. I am teaching your child with the same methods I would be using anyway, but just recording and analyzing the data according to my methods in guided reading groups. All results will be confidential and anonymous. I will not record information about individual students, such as their names, nor report identifying information or characteristics in the capstone. Participation is voluntary and you may decide at any time and without negative consequences that information about your child will not be included in the capstone.

I have received approval for my study from the School of Education at Hamline University and from Rochester Public Schools and more specifically, Brandon Macrafic (District Office.) The capstone will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository. My results might also be included in an article for publication in a professional journal or in a report at a professional conference. In all cases, your child's identity and participation in this study will be confidential.

If you agree that your child may participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return to me by mail or copy the form in an email me no later than November 9, 2016. If you have any questions, please email or call me at school.

Sincerely,
Emily O'Rourke
Phone Number
Address
Email

Keep this full page for your records.

Please return this page to me by November 9, 2016.

The purpose of this signature is to ask your permission for your child to take part in my research.

This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush

Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways. Your child will be completely deidentified.

I have received your letter about the study you plan to conduct in which you will be observing students' behavior in groups. I understand there is little to no risk involved for my child, that his/her confidentiality will be protected, and that I may withdraw or my child may withdraw from the project at any time.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix J

Anecdotal notes taken during testing and guided reading.

1R reader December 6, 2016 had 100% accuracy; strong comprehension; working on 3-syllable words

1R reader in November struggled to move on to the next reading level; decoding is difficult

2B reader fluency is improving throughout; decoding is coming along; comprehension is fair

2R reader January 6, 2017 had 3 miscues; strong comprehension; acquired more vocabulary words

2R reader strong fluency throughout the time of research

BK reader December 19, 2017; great fluency and intonation; incorrect flipping of a vowel

1R reader working on word recognition throughout the time of research

2R reader January 2017; great fluency and intonation, but too many miscues to get to the next reading level

2R reader throughout the data collection needs improvement in fluency; comprehension is strong and sequential

1B reader having difficulty with –ed endings and fluency

2R reader nice fluency; decoding can be the biggest of this reader's struggles

1R reader strong fluency, but not always sufficient comprehension

2B reader sufficient questioning about the story when the reader did not completely understand the story

WT reader January 2017 omits words while reading from time to time; fluency and comprehension are strong; rushing

2R reader 100% accuracy; great fluency and intonation; strong comprehension

WT reader skipped words and had minimal difficulty decoding words; comprehension strong

2R reader fluency needs improvement throughout data collection; comprehension strong

BK reader strong fluency and comprehension; combined words at times

1R reader decoding words with ci=sh sound prove difficult; comprehension good; fluency needs improvement December 2016

2R reader decoding words can be tricky for this reader; fluency and comprehension are great

WT reader 4th grade words are difficult for this reader in December and January; comprehension and fluency are strong

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